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AN INTERNATIONAL WAR CHEST.

H. T. WEEKS.

IN the schemes for a League of Nations suggested by the English League of Nations Society and by the American "League to Enforce Peace," the clauses are confined to eight. A treaty is to be made binding the signatories to use peaceful methods for dealing with all disputes arising among them. They are to be settled by an International Judicial Tribunal or a permanent Council of Inquiry and Conciliation, and they agree to jointly use economic and military forces against any of the members who go to war before submitting the dispute to the appropriate court. They are to unite in any action necessary to compel obedience to the decisions of the Judicial Tribunal, and mutual defence against attack is provided for. A permanent International Conference to formulate and codify International Law is to be established, while any civilised state desiring to join is to be admitted.

The manner of applying their economic and military forces is not worked out in detail. Presumably these details would be settled later when the League is in being. But is it not imperative, if the League is to influence the peace arrangements, that these details should be discussed and some *modus operandi* arrived at in order that the League should be in a position to start at once, on the conclusion of peace. A Conference of the Nations forming the nucleus of the League should be called together immediately to discuss these details. Their conclusions could be rejected or ratified by each nation later. Or, committees could be appointed in each Nation to work out details for future comparison and adjustment. Wise statesmanship would not leave these matters in abeyance, but having accepted the idea of a League of Nations, the details of its harmonious working should be thought and worked out.

The objection to the League is sometimes raised that

owing to constant petty quarrels between the smaller states, the forces of the League would be mobilised and demobilised continually at great expense and dislocation of normal life. Also the smaller states contiguous to the territory of the Great Powers would not care to join the League, or subscribe to the arrangements for mutual defence, because a seceding Great Power could overrun their territory, make it a cock pit and inflict incalculable injury on them before the rest of the Nations had got their armies into full swing. These two considerations point to the necessity of providing an International Executive with a standing army at command, fully equipped and ready for action at a moment's notice.

The question of Unity of Control for such a force again would require thoroughly working out and adjusting as we see from the difficulties at once occurring over the proposal for a Supreme War Council.

There is one point which possibly is worth considering—the cost of maintenance of this army. Of course, if as a result of the enormous cost of the present war disarmament all round down to a simple force to maintain internal order is arrived at, the international standing army need not be large, and therefore the cost might be moderate. It would have to be stationed at various strategic points and these will want carefully arranging by the International Conference. Any movements or massing of these International troops in the direction of any probable outburst of trouble would have to be distinctly understood among the Nations, as partaking of a non-aggressive character and in no sense justifying reciprocal warlike moves. Some safeguard would have to be provided against the Generalissimo taking matters into his own hands. Actual hostilities might be commenced only by the proclamation of the International Executive to the army by accredited civilian members of the International Conference. Each Nation of the League would contribute a share apportioned to its population and wealth. Each Nation of the League would send its quota of men and equipment. For perfect co-ordination we

should possibly have to try to get over the language difficulty by making the study of French or Esperanto a part of the training of each unit. Each nation would support its quota—but there would be need of a war chest in case of trouble. This might partake of the nature of an insurance premium. The payments would be continuous and more or less uniform from each member of the League. The total sum available could at once be utilised in case of emergency. These contributions might accumulate as years go on and let us hope with practically no calls for its use. What is to happen to the Fund? It would have to be vested in the joint Conference of the League. It would also have to be invested by them in securities which could be easily realised into gold or commodities. It might perhaps be lent to various nations for purposes of development. They would agree to issue Bonds bearing a rate of interest which would accrue to the war chest. They might use the loan say for harbours, railways, a channel tunnel, canals or mining and general development, naturally at spots and in districts approved of and sanctioned by the Joint Conference of the League. Or the League might construct and itself administer works of international importance. In the event of secession from the League, the loans would become due to the League and the League would take over and control the property until the loan was paid off. In the event of defiance of the League the same thing might happen. Thus this Fund might become one of the best means of cementing the League together and avoiding the possibility of defection on the part of lukewarm members.

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